

North Carolina
Profile of State High School Exit Exam Policies

<i>State exit exam policy</i>	Beginning in the 2010-11 school year, the state board of education eliminated the high school exit standards for the North Carolina end-of-course exams. Therefore, students are required to take the end-of-course exams, which now count for a portion of the student’s final grade, but are not required to pass in order to receive a high school diploma. However, local school districts have the option of maintaining the high school exit standards.
Type of test	End-of-course
Purpose	<p>The North Carolina end-of-course (EOC) assessments were developed for two purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide accurate measurement of individual student knowledge and skills specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and ● To provide accurate measurement of the knowledge and skills attained by groups of students for school, school system, and state accountability. <p>End-of-course tests are based on the assessment of higher level skills within the context of specific subject-area content. When properly administered and interpreted, these test results provide an independent, uniform source of reliable and valid information, which enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students to know the extent to which they have mastered expected knowledge and skills and how they compare to others, ● Parents to know if their children are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a highly competitive job market, ● Teachers to know if their students have mastered subject area knowledge and skills in the curriculum and, if not, what weaknesses need to be addressed, ● Community leaders and lawmakers to know if students in North Carolina schools are improving their performance over time and how the students compare with students around the state, and ● Citizens to objectively assess their return on investment in the public schools.

	See http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/briefs/opereocassessmentbrief2005.pdf for more information.
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for financial reasons	No changes were made for financial reasons.
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for <i>other</i> reasons	As described above, the state board of education eliminated the high school exit standards and the student accountability standards policies effective with the 2010-11 school year. This was in response to an analysis that showed that there were very few changes in retention rates and that principals had the legal authority to promote or declare that a student met the exit standards without passing the assessment(s). Later in the school year, the NC General Assembly eliminated two of the five EOC assessments that used to be part of the statewide testing program and that were used for the exit standards (civics & economics, and U.S. History). These tests and other EOCs (Algebra II and physical science) were removed because they are not required under ESEA.
Year first administered	The end of course assessments were in place several years before they became part of the high school exit standards. The exit standards were put in place for students entering the 9 th grade for the first time in the 2006-07 school year.
Year diplomas first withheld	2009-10 (for new exit standards), but eliminated in 2010-11.
Subjects tested on exam	Students entering 9 th grade in 2006-07 are required to take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English I, U.S. history, civics and economics, and biology to meet the new exit standards. However, the exit standards were eliminated in 2010-11 school year.
Subjects required for graduation	Students entering 9 th grade in 2006-07 are required to take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English I, U.S. history, civics and economics, and biology to meet the new exit standards. However, the exit standards were eliminated in 2010-11 school year. The courses themselves are required for graduation to receive a diploma, except for select students with disabilities following the

	occupational course of study.
Grade exam first administered	Timing of end-of-course assessments depends on when students take the respective courses.
Grade(s) exam aligned to	End-of-course assessments are course-specific.
Number of retakes allowed <i>before</i> the end of grade 12	Not applicable
Number of retakes allowed <i>after</i> grade 12	Not applicable
Is the exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability purposes?	No, the five EOC assessments that comprised the former exit standards were not used for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes. However, Algebra I EOC and the combination of English I EOC and the grade 10 writing assessment were and are used as the high school math and English language arts (ELA) components for AYP. Biology is the high school science EOC used for ESEA purposes, but it is not a part of AYP determinations.
Is the same cut score used for graduation and NCLB accountability purposes?	Not applicable
Considerations given to changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes in the past year	Not applicable
Alternate paths to graduation for students other than English language	No

learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities	
Determination of eligibility to pursue these alternate paths to graduation	Not applicable
Number and percentage of students who used alternate paths in 2010-11 school year	Not applicable
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners	No
Number and percentage of ELL students using alternate paths in the 2010-11 school year	Not applicable
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities	Yes. Students with disabilities who are following the occupational course of study (OCS) are not required to meet the same standards as non-OCS students to receive a diploma. Only certain students with disabilities may participate in OCS, as determined by each student's IEP team.
Number and percentage of students with disabilities using alternate paths in the 2010-11 school year	Based on preliminary data (still undergoing quality control checks), 23.7% of students with disabilities graduated following the OCS.
Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for undergraduate admission purposes?	No

Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for placement purposes?	No
Are students who meet a certain standard on the state exit exam granted exemptions on college placement exams?	No
Can students receive any form of postsecondary education course credit for their performance on the exit exam?	No
Access to initial and cumulative pass rates on high school exit exams	Not applicable
State participation in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	North Carolina has adopted the CCSS in both English language arts and math.
CCSS testing consortia membership	North Carolina is a member of SMARTER Balanced.
Impact of adoption of the CCSS on high school exit exam policies	Not applicable
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in English language arts with a	Not applicable for exit exam but a new English II EOC assessment aligned with the CCSS is being developed for implementation in the 2012-13 school year.

new assessment aligned to the CCSS	
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in math with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS	Not applicable for exit exam but a new math EOC assessment aligned with the CCSS is being developed for implementation in the 2012-13 school year that will be taken by students completing Algebra I or Integrated Math I.
Plans to maintain current exit exams in subjects other than English language arts and math once the Common Core State Standards are fully implemented	Not applicable for exit exam but a new Biology EOC assessment aligned with the state's new Essential Standards is being developed for implementation in the 2012-13 school year.
Will changes in state exit exams mentioned above make the exams more rigorous, less rigorous, or about the same?	Not applicable for exit exam but the expectation is that the new EOC assessments will be more rigorous than the current assessments.
Preparation for students and teachers to transition to new exam	Not applicable for exit exam but six regional summer institutes were held this summer (2011) using a blended approach for professional development for all LEAs around the new Common Core and Essential Standards. Each LEA was allowed to send a team of up to 13 individuals that would be responsible for providing training to all teachers in their respective school districts during the 2011-12 school year. See http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/conferences/summerinstitutes/